

# Starting a New Program: Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

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# Water Quality Education Program

- Six schools + HRI
- 200 Students

- Eight locations

- Eight sampling trips per site



# Water Quality Education Program

## ■ Data Collected

- Climate conditions
  - Temp, wind, sun, rain, etc.
- Physical parameters
  - Temp, turbidity
- Chemical parameters
  - Dissolved oxygen, carbon dioxide, salinity, pH, ammonia, nitrates, phosphates, copper
- Biological parameters
  - Macro-inverts, shade, riffles, bottom composition



Keep it as simple as possible!!!!

# Goals and Objectives

## ■ Tier System

- A – Environmental Education
- B – Stewardship
- C – Community Assessment
- D – Indicators

# Time: Logistics or Love

## ■ Support

- Existing Programs
- Government is your friend

## ■ Funding

- Government
- Grants
- End-users (Environ. Coms., BOE, Scouts, others)

## ■ Technology

- Many Manufacturers
- Colleges & Schools
- Existing Programs

# Recruiting

## ■ Internal Methods

- Newsletters - *Hackensack Tidelines*
- Website - [www.HackensackRiverkeeper.org](http://www.HackensackRiverkeeper.org)
- List serve
- Press releases
- Personal interactions
- Initial success

## ■ External Methods

- Partners' literature
- Press coverage

# Recruiting ... Schools

## “Water Monitoring Education Program”

- Personalized letters to science teachers or depts.
- Fit program into their schedule
- Emphasize their curriculum
  - Grade equivalent topics
  - NJ Core Standards
  - BOE, school and/or teacher standards



# Training

- **Most important step!** - Don't scare away your volunteers with terminology or methodology
- **“Least Common Denominator”**
  - Understand and be comfortable with materials
    - This will take time
    - This will take effort
    - This will take money
  - You need to train volunteers
    - This will take time
    - This will take effort
    - This will take money

# Training

- One-on-one crash course
- Large groups to share qualms and questions
- Apprenticeships

# Retaining Volunteers

## ■ Communication

- Contact recruits well in advance to discuss their strengths. Meld their interests with your program.

## ■ Communication

- Regular communication can resolve problems and quell minor frustrations before you lose a volunteer.

## ■ Communication

- Regular updates about data-use and “the big picture” gives a sense of validation to the program.

## ■ Communication

- Public recognition is satisfying and fun for all.

# Contact

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